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EDITORIAL.

THE TRAINED NURSE AS MUNICIPAL ELECTOR.

Does it ever occur to the majority of nurses, we wonder, that they have other public duties besides the care of the sick population? Excuses, such as, "I have no time"—"It does not interest me"—"It does not concern me"—cannot exonerate them from their citizen duties, which are not those of choice, but what we will call birthrights—obligations of inheritance. Such duties are rights of others as well as our own, therefore the more compelling, and should be both attractive and alluring. Look at it how you will, the nurse is a citizen, and she cannot conscientiously and consistently neglect her duties as such. All nurses having the necessary qualifications are entitled to vote at the Municipal Elections. On November 1, 1922, these important elections are due to take place, and those who do not record their vote will be neglecting a duty of such importance that we take this early opportunity of reminding them of it.

Let us look at it a little more closely, and enquire into the meaning of the symbolic sign that we place on the ballot paper. The names against which the \times is placed are those of persons who are about to undertake the grave responsibilities of Local Government, and those who make the potent \times are those who—we suppose—realise that upon them rests the onus of choice. "Make choice of fit persons," because upon that depends the health, happiness, contentment, and well-being of thousands of people. The health of the people; that is where it touches the citizen nurse. Health means *ease*, ill-health means *dis-ease*; and it lies with the nurse largely to promote the one and combat the other. The control of the health of the com-

munity is primarily in the hands of the Ministry of Health. That is now the Central Authority, having taken over all the duties (in respect of health) of the former Local Government Board, which it has replaced, with additional powers, which are delegated to the various Municipal bodies—County, Borough and District Councils. The Public Health Act of 1875 is the principal Sanitary Act, of which the Local Councils are the Administrative Authorities. The campaign against tuberculosis is largely bound up with this beneficent Act; consequently, the tuberculosis nurse and doctor are affected by it. The study of the provisions of this Act would appeal to the intelligence of the well-trained nurse.

The sphere and the outlook of the nurse have been widening rapidly during the past 15 years; she is no longer the clinical or bed-side nurse only. She is a health missionary, a citizen; she is a social worker, a Parliamentary and Municipal elector; and she can now—if she wishes it—wear the hall-mark of Registered Nurse as a crowning distinction. She assumes, with this honoured title, an increased responsibility towards the community. The trained nurse is employed by the State in various branches of nursing; she is employed as a Health Visitor by the Municipality: can she afford to be apathetic and indifferent to her duties and responsibilities as a Parliamentary and Municipal voter? The readers of this journal are among the "intelligentsia" of the Nursing Profession, and we feel confident that the appeal we make to them not to disregard their privileged duties of citizenship, by carefully enquiring into the credentials, qualifications and abilities of the men and women candidates for Local Government, and recording their votes accordingly, will not be in vain.

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